

[Translation]

#### Development of Tourist Spots

2932. SHRI ASHOK ARGAL :  
SHRI BRAJ MOHAN RAM :

Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state :

(a) the details of the tourism spots in the country which the Union Government propose to develop during the Ninth Five Year Plan;

(b) whether there is any scheme to develop any place in Morena/Bhind districts of Madhya Pradesh and Betla and Netarhaj located in Palamau in Bihar as tourist spots; and

(c) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRI SRIKANTA JENA) : (a) Development of tourist spots is primarily the responsibility of the State Government/Union Territory Administrations. However, the department of Tourism, Govt. of India extends Central financial assistance for specific tourism projects submitted during the duration of five year plans by the State Government/Union Territory Administration based on their merits, *inter se* priority and availability of funds.

(b) and (c) The Department of Tourism has not received any proposal for financial assistance from Government of Madhya Pradesh for Morena/Bhind district and from Government of Bihar for Betla. However, the Department of Tourism has identified wayside facilities between Netrahat and Ranchi for central financial assistance during 1996-97.

#### Closure of Mines in Rajasthan

2933. SHRI BHERU LAL MEENA : Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether thousands mines of marble and soapstone have been closed down in tribal district of Udaipur in Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to rehabilitate the workers?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) to (c) Marble is a minor mineral as per the provisions of section 3(e) of the Mines and Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 and grant of mineral concessions is regulated by Rules framed by the concerned State Governments. For soapstone, State Governments have the powers for grant of mineral concessions and approval of the Central Government is not required.

As per information available, a number of marble and soapstone mines of the tribal district of Udaipur in Rajasthan have been closed down in compliance of the interim order dated 12.12.96 of the Supreme Court in the writ petition (Civil) No.202 of 1995 with writ petition (Civil) No. 171/96 under which the Apex Court had directed that in accordance with section-2 of the Forest (Conservation) Act, all on-going activity within any forest in any State, throughout the Country, without the prior approval of the Central Government, must cease forthwith. Hon'ble Supreme Court has passed further orders on 4.3.97 directing time bound clearance of pending cases requiring approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The State Government have to take further action as per directions of the Supreme Court contained in the above orders.

#### Jobless Workers in Beedi Industry

2934. DR. LAXMINARAYAN PANDEY : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether a memorandum from Beedi producers has been given to the Government to the effect that thousands of beedi workers have been rendered jobless with the coming of "mini cigarette" in the market; and

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM) : (a) and (b) The Govt. had received representations from Beedi Workers and Manufacturers' Unions apprehending adverse impact on employment in beedi industry due to marketing of mini cigarettes. The rate of excise duty on mini cigarettes of length not exceeding 60mm has been increased by 25% from 1996-97.

#### Foreign Assistance for Exploration of Mine in M.P. and U.P.

2935. SHRI SHIVRAJ SINGH :  
SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :

Will the Minister of MINES be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Union Government have asked for any foreign assistance in regard to the exploration and development of minerals in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh during the last two years; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) and (b) Exploration of mineral wealth and development of mineral resources are *inter-alia* basic objectives of National Mineral Policy, 1993. The Policy envisages induction of foreign technology and foreign participation in exploration and mining for high value and scarce minerals to be pursued. Further foreign equity investment in joint ventures in mining promoted by Indian companies would be encouraged. While foreign

investment in equity would be normally limited to 50%, enhanced equity holding could be cleared on case to case basis.

Amendments to the Mines & Minerals (Regulation & Development) Act, 1957 have also been effected to facilitate foreign equity participation. The application for grant of Mineral Concessions have to be made before the State Governments only. The Central Government does not monitor receipt of such application by the State Governments.

#### **Telephone Connections in Metro Cities**

2936. DR. RAMESH CHAND TOMAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the difference between demand and supply of new telephone connections in the four metropolitan cities of the country; and

(b) the scheme formulated by the Government for providing telephone connections to the person in the waiting list?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The difference between demand and supply of new telephone connections (i.e. waiting list) in the four metropolitan cities of the country as on 31-01-97 are as given below:

Name of Metro City	Difference between Demand and Supply
1. Mumbai	55626
2. Delhi	38941
3. Calcutta	77961
4. Chennai	95452

(b) For providing telephone connections to the persons in the waiting list, the following targets are proposed during 1996-97

Name of Metro City	Targets for 1996-97
1. Mumbai	2,50,000
2. Delhi	2,50,000
3. Calcutta	55,000
4. Chennai	75,000

Further, the targets are proposed to be fixed for 1997-98 such that the waiting list as on 31-03-97 is likely to be covered progressively during 1997-98.

[English]

#### **Gauge Conversion**

2937. SHRI MURALIDHAR JENA :  
SHRI THOMAS HANSDA :

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the total existing length of narrow gauge lines, zone-wise; and

(b) the length out of that proposed to be converted into broad gauge during the current year and next three years, zone-wise and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) The total length (Route Kilometres) of narrow gauge lines zone-wise is as follows:

Railway	Length of narrow gauge line (Route Kilometres) (as on 31.3.96)
Central	996
Eastern	132
Northern	260
North Eastern	-
Northeast Frontier	87
Southern	102
South Central	-
South Eastern	1,340
Western	877
	<b>3,794</b>

(b) In the current year 46 kilometres of narrow gauge line would be converted to broad gauge, 28 kilometres on South Eastern Railway in Maharashtra and 18 kilometres on Southern Railway in Karnataka. In 1997-98, 111 kilometres are targetted for completion on South Eastern Railway in Maharashtra. The lines to be converted in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 have not yet been decided.

#### **Conversion of Bitragunta Steam Loco Shed**

2938. SHRIMATI LAKSHMI PANABAKA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have received some representations regarding conversion of major steam loco shed at Bitragunta under South Central Railway into electric loco shed or workshop;